

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Please cancel claims 9, 11 and 15 without prejudice.

Please amend claims 10, 12-14 and 16 as indicated below (material to be inserted is in **bold and underline**, material to be deleted is in ~~strikeout~~ or (if the deletion is of five or fewer consecutive characters or would be difficult to see) in double brackets [[]]):

Listing of Claims:

1-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Presented) An optical object detector comprising:

a feed path;

a reference pattern facing the feed path;

an optical sensor configured to view the reference pattern through the feed path, absence of the reference pattern from the view of the optical sensor indicating presence of an object in the feed path;

wherein the optical sensor includes a scanner and wherein the reference pattern at least partially defines a backing to a scan region along the feed path such that absence of the reference pattern from view of the scanner indicates presence of a to-be-scanned object in the scan region.

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6. (Original) The optical object detector of claim 5, wherein the reference pattern extends substantially across the backing, transverse to the feed path.

7. (Original) The optical object detector of claim 5, wherein the backing is selectively retractable from the scan region.

8. (Original) The optical object detector of claim 5, wherein the backing is pivotally retractable upon passage of a to-be-scanned object into the scan region, thereby removing the reference pattern from view of the scanner.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Currently Amended) A method of detecting an object in a feed path, the method comprising:

viewing the feed path to identify a viewable pattern, the viewable pattern nominally being a reference pattern disposed opposite a point of view through the feed path, wherein the viewing the feed path includes emitting light toward a scan region of the feed path and detecting light reflected from the scan region, such reflected light defining the viewable pattern;

comparing the viewable pattern to the reference pattern, a predetermined difference between the viewable pattern and the reference pattern indicating presence of an object in the feed path,

wherein viewing the feed path and comparing the viewable pattern to the reference pattern are performed iteratively, and wherein initially noting the predetermined difference between the viewable pattern and the reference pattern indicates entry of the object into the scan region.

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11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[11]] 10, which further comprises feeding an object through the scan region to alter view of the reference pattern from the point of view through the scan region.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[11]] 10, which further comprises feeding an object through the scan region to obstruct view of the reference pattern.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[11]] 10, which further comprises feeding an object through the scan region to displace the reference pattern.

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[15]] 10, which further comprises iteratively recording viewable patterns to define a scanned image upon noting the predetermined difference between the viewable pattern and the reference pattern.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, which further comprises ceasing recording of viewable patterns upon noting substantial identity between the viewable pattern and the reference pattern.

18. (Original) A method of directing scanning in an imaging device, the method comprising:

iteratively viewing a scan region, from opposite a backing having a reference pattern thereon, to identify a viewable pattern in the scan region; and

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upon noting a change in the viewable pattern from a pattern substantially identical to the reference pattern to a pattern substantially different from the reference pattern, beginning recording of iteratively viewed viewable patterns.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18, which further comprises, upon noting a change in the viewable pattern from a pattern substantially different from the reference pattern to a pattern substantially identical to the reference pattern, ceasing recording of iteratively viewed viewable patterns.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18, wherein viewing the scan region includes emitting an array of light toward the scan region and detecting a corresponding array of light reflected from the scan region.

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Previously Presented) An imaging device comprising:

feed mechanism configured to direct an object along a feed path through a scan region of the imaging device;

a backing to the scan region, the backing defining a reference pattern;

an optical sensor configured to view the scan region to identify a viewable pattern as viewed by the optical sensor;

a processor configured to identify presence in the scan region of an object which is to be scanned by the imaging device based on comparison of the viewable pattern with the reference pattern;

wherein the optical sensor is configured to periodically view the scan region, and wherein the processor is configured to record viewable patterns which are different from the reference pattern.

23. (Original) The imaging device of claim 22, wherein the reference pattern is selected to reliably differ from viewable patterns of objects in the feed path.

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Cancelled)

26. (Previously Presented) An imaging device comprising:
feed mechanism configured to direct an object along a feed path through a scan region of the imaging device;

a backing to the scan region, the backing defining a reference pattern;

an optical sensor configured to view the scan region to identify a viewable pattern as viewed by the optical sensor;

a processor configured to identify presence in the scan region of an object which is to be scanned by the imaging device based on comparison of the viewable pattern with the reference pattern;

wherein the optical sensor is configured to iteratively view the scan region to define successive viewable patterns, and wherein the processor is configured to note a change in viewable pattern from a pattern substantially identical to the reference pattern to a pattern substantially different from the reference pattern, and upon noting such change, to begin recording of successive viewable patterns.

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27. (Original) The imaging device of claim 26, wherein the processor is further configured to note a change in viewable pattern from a pattern substantially different from the reference pattern to a pattern substantially identical to the reference pattern, and upon noting such change, to cease recording of successive viewable patterns.

28. (Cancelled)

29. (Previously Presented) An imaging device including a scan region with a backing having a reference pattern thereon, the imaging device comprising:

means for viewing through the scan region to identify successive viewable patterns; and

means for comparing the successive viewable patterns with the reference pattern, a difference between viewable pattern and reference pattern signifying presence in the scan region of an object which is to be scanned by the imaging device;

which further comprises means for noting a change in viewable pattern from a pattern substantially identical to the reference pattern to a pattern substantially different from the reference pattern, and upon noting such change, for beginning recording of successive viewable patterns.

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30. (Previously Presented) An imaging device including a scan region with a backing having a reference pattern thereon, the imaging device comprising:

means for viewing through the scan region to identify successive viewable patterns; and

means for comparing the successive viewable patterns with the reference pattern, a difference between viewable pattern and reference pattern signifying presence in the scan region of an object which is to be scanned by the imaging device;

which further comprises means for noting a change in viewable pattern from a pattern substantially different from the reference pattern to a pattern substantially identical to the reference pattern, and upon noting such change, for ceasing recording of successive viewable patterns.